A Campus Example:

Syracuse University and
Campus Connect

How We Determined the Direction for our Training

• Experiences from Syracuse University:
  – Overwhelmed gatekeepers
  – Overwhelmed and disconnected students
• What we know from crisis intervention research:
  – Importance of empathic understanding and emotional processing
• What we know from therapy process research:
  – Importance of therapeutic relationship
• What we know from learning theory:
  – Active vs. Passive learning
• What we know from multicultural theory:
  – Knowledge, Skills, and Awareness
• Are there parallel processes at play in gatekeeper training?
Campus Connect: Basic Philosophies

• Gatekeepers can be trained to work with students in crisis
  – Not to fear them, punish them, or shut them down

• Gatekeepers can be trained to identify, understand, and relate to emotional experiences of students in crisis
  – Result is enhanced empathy skills and enhanced gatekeeper-student relationship

• Gatekeepers experience greater awareness of themselves and others when active learning is emphasized over passive learning
  – Result is increased comfort and skill in responding to students in crisis

• Students in crisis can benefit directly from support and understanding provided by gatekeepers
  – Result is reduced suicidal ideation and increased likelihood of following through with referral as a result of the connection and interaction with the gatekeeper

Campus Connect Core Components: Knowledge

• Basic statistics and definitions
• Warning signs
• Risk factors
• Myths
• Referral sources
Campus Connect Core Components: Relationship Skills

• Skills to Connect with Others
  – How to ask the “right” questions
  – How to express understanding
  – How to facilitate expression
  – Listening with awareness and empathy

Campus Connect Core Components: Experienced Self-Awareness

• To connect with others, you must be emotionally present and available
• It is important to sufficiently prepare gatekeepers for powerful emotions that occur in crisis situations
• Basic training philosophy:
  – Bring the relationship into the intervention by bringing the gatekeepers into the training
  – Gatekeepers as active learning participants
A Few Experiential Examples

- Personalizing Crisis
  - Helps overcome fear of crisis
  - Establishes “helpful” response behaviors
- Non-verbal interviewing
  - Experience of feeling misunderstood
  - Underscore importance of direct, concise questions
- The power of expression
  - A useful tool in overcoming the fear of asking about suicide and to emphasize value of open discussion of suicide
- The anxiety of sitting with suicidal people
- Who attempts Suicide: Photo Exercise
- Role Plays

A Few Cautions About Role Plays

- Can be one of the most effective training tools
- Consider the format:
  - Individual vs. Group
  - Why Campus Connect employs group role play
    - Importance of consistent role play across trainings
    - Importance of ending role play successfully
- Importance of processing trainee emotions
- Should not be the only experiential exercise
Evaluation and Measurement:

An Example From Syracuse

Assessing Effectiveness:
Design Issues

• Important factors to consider:
  – Pre/post assessment designs
  – Consistent experience across groups
  – Incorporating a control group
  – Follow-up assessments
Assessing Effectiveness: Measures Used

- Determining how you actually want to measure effectiveness
- Our objective was measuring
  - Knowledge/Skills
  - Attitude/Confidence
- SIRI-II
- SITA

Year One

- All 150 Resident Assistants participated in Campus Connect training
- Unfortunately, only 82 pre-post assessments available due to difficulty in administering pre-assessments
Results For Year One

Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for SIRI-2

<table>
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<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>N</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-test</td>
<td>76.6690</td>
<td>22.13982</td>
<td>82</td>
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<tr>
<td>Post-test</td>
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<tr>
<td>Difference</td>
<td>22.0861</td>
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p<.001

*The mean represents the participant’s deviation from the expert score; therefore a smaller number is a better score

Year Two

• All new Resident Assistants participated in Campus Connect training  
• To assess significance of experiential exercises we employed a different research design  
  – RAs divided into 6 groups  
  – 4 of those groups completed training in standard 3 hour format along with pre and post measures  
  – 2 groups completed training over 2 days, with all experiential exercises withheld until day 2  
    • These groups completed pre/post/post measures
Assessing the Importance of Experiential Exercises

• Again, scored are based on SIRI-II
• Group One
  – Mean pre-training: 84.33
  – Mean post-training: 60.19
• Group Two
  – Mean pre-training: 79.23
  – Mean post-training: 70.84
  – Mean post-training: 56.55
• All in-group and between-group comparisons of difference scores were significant at p<.01

Future Research Plans

• Follow-up focus groups to receive feedback from trainees regarding experiences of implementation
• Video taped role plays
• Tracking referrals
• Broadening the definition of gatekeeper
• Daring to think bigger!
  – Can we impact our campus culture?
    • Broad based student survey measuring loneliness, perceived support, and connection